

Kent L. Willis, Ph.D.

Senior Higher Education Executive · Enrollment Management · Student Affairs

kent.willis4@gmail.com · linkedin.com/in/drkentwillis

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Higher education executive with more than 15 years of experience advancing institutional strategy, academic and student success, organizational effectiveness, and community engagement. Leadership spans public universities, an academic health science center, and a private college, with accomplishments in strategic planning, institutional integration, academic program development, accreditation, enrollment growth, fundraising, and financial stewardship. Aligns people, resources, and partnerships with institutional mission to expand educational opportunity and strengthen long-term sustainability. Brings complementary experience as a graduate faculty member, scholar, trustee, and community leader, connecting institutional priorities with student achievement and regional needs.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Educational Management (Higher Education) — Hampton University, 2015

Master of Education in Secondary Education — East Central University, 2010

Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management — Texas A&M University, 2010

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies — Stephen F. Austin State University, 2008

SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES

- **Stephen F. Austin State University:** Delivered SFA's largest first-time undergraduate class, with a 31% increase in first-time undergraduate enrollment, a 16% increase in first-time transfer enrollment, and a 7% increase in total headcount—the first fall-to-fall headcount increase since 2018.
- **Stephen F. Austin State University:** Secured approval for **\$12.04 million** in one-time FY 2026 housing capital funding and **\$800,000** in ongoing annual funding for deferred maintenance.
- **California State University, Fresno:** Raised **\$6.9 million** during 2023–2024, the division's highest fundraising total in the past 10 years.
- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler:** Played a key supporting role in developing the operating model for the new School of Medicine, reporting to the Dean of the School of Medicine. Contributed to development of the admissions process, academic planning, student support, and student affairs and enrollment policy; chaired the UT Tyler School of Medicine Self-Study Committee and supported institutional preparation for Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Student Engagement

2024–present

Stephen F. Austin State University – Nacogdoches, TX

Chief enrollment and student affairs officer providing executive leadership across the full student lifecycle, integrating enrollment management, student affairs, and student success to advance access, persistence, and institutional growth.

- Lead a newly integrated Division of Enrollment and Student Engagement, aligning recruitment, admissions, financial aid, student affairs, housing, and engagement functions to improve persistence and graduation outcomes while overseeing an annual budget of more than **\$25 million**.
- Strengthened the enrollment funnel, contributing to a 12% increase in first-time undergraduate applications, a 25% increase in first-time undergraduate admits, a 21% increase in transfer applications, and an 18% increase in transfer admits.
- Oversaw enrollment growth that resulted in a 9% increase in credit hours, the highest since Fall 2020 and the first annual increase since Fall 2021, strengthening the university's state funding position.
- Advanced affordability and access initiatives in alignment with UT System investment, including expansion of Purple Promise, Lumberjack Launch, and Lumberjack Transfer Alliance programs.
- Championed a holistic student success and well-being agenda, aligning enrollment growth with coordinated case management, student support, and engagement strategies.
- Led residential capacity and student experience planning to support growth, including development of a 10-year residence hall deferred maintenance plan.
- Expanded residential staffing and student support infrastructure, including new graduate assistantships, frontline services, and a dedicated professional role focused on student accommodations, health, and well-being.
- Lead a division of 275 employees through five senior direct reports: the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; the Chief Enrollment Officer and Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management; the Associate Vice President for Student Services Administration; the Associate Vice President for Student Health and Well-Being; and the Executive Director of Campus Recreation.
- **Strengthened institutional capacity for long-term growth**, balancing enrollment demand with operational readiness through enrollment caps, housing planning, and strategic resource alignment to protect academic quality and student engagement during a period of renewed momentum.

Assistant Professor of Practice, James I. Perkins College of Education

2025–present

Stephen F. Austin State University – Nacogdoches, TX

Graduate faculty member contributing to instruction, mentorship, and applied scholarship in higher education administration and student affairs.

- Teach graduate-level coursework in Ethical and Legal Issues in Student Affairs, emphasizing applied decision-making, compliance, and professional responsibility.
- Integrate executive leadership experience into curriculum through case-based learning and real-world policy analysis.
- Mentor graduate students preparing for leadership roles in enrollment management and student affairs.

Vice President – Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

2022–2024

California State University – Fresno, CA

- **Strategic Planning:** Partnered with the university president and leadership team to define the strategic plan and programs covering key facilities, including a comprehensive Health Center, Recreation Center, Learning Center, Center for Career Development, University Advising Center, Student Life, and Center for Essential Needs.

- **Financial Management:** Allocated a \$20.2 million annual operating budget for a division with 30 units and 300 FTEs. Headed budgeting, forecasting, and reporting at both the division- and program level to illustrate trends, evaluate student success and engagement impacts, and maintain fiscal discipline.
- **Enrollment Management:** Launched the region’s first Direct Admit program, which enrolled 1,250 new students. Separately, the university enrolled a record 6,541 new undergraduates: 3,676 first-year students and 2,865 transfer students.
 - Showcased the Student Affairs division's contribution to prospective students and families, resulting in a 22% increase in inquiries about Student Affairs programs and services post-launch.
 - Established a cross-divisional strategic enrollment management task force to broaden collaboration across the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Technology Services, and the Division of Graduate Studies.
 - Spearheaded internal data-mining study with the Registrar's Office, Admissions Office, and University Advising Center to re-engage students who left the university in good standing, leading to a 32% increase in returning students.
- **Enrollment Marketing & Systems:**
 - Sourced and structured 17 school-district partnerships through the Guaranteed Admit program, driving 15% admissions growth. Led integrated digital, onsite, and event campaigns that increased social media impressions by 15%, and implemented a CRM to align technology with enrollment strategy.
 - Collaborated with central marketing and university stakeholders on the “Letters to A Graduate” project, recognized with a 2024 CASE Gold Award.
- **Student Engagement:**
 - Initiated feedback mechanisms to elicit student responses on university facilities and resources and adapt programming accordingly. Identified early student distress signals, barriers to academic performance, and disengagement drivers to develop and recommend appropriate interventions.
 - Collaborated with the Fresno State auxiliary to garner funds for a \$500,000 renovation of the Student Recreation Center.
- **Needs-based Student Support:** Reallocated \$325,000 of state grant funds towards basic student needs including housing emergencies, food security, and money management to address urgent or emergency situations, plan student-centric responses, and enhance student success outcomes.
- **Staff Development:** Enhanced professional development and engagement of more than 300 personnel through the Professional Growth Leadership Academy, resulting in a 20% increase in staff satisfaction scores leading to a 2024 Best Places to Work in Student Affairs recognition by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA).
- **Development:** Collaborated with the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management team to secure the second-highest development total among university departments.
- **Fundraising:** Strengthened partnership with a leading donor to secure a 28% increase in giving and focused on the creation of a donor pipeline with the new generation. Established and ensured long-term program support for endowment funds including a new Student Success Speaker Series and the Good Samaritan Fund.
- **Campus Collaboration:** Fostered a partnership with University Marketing and Communications that resulted in Fresno State’s first-ever CASE Circle of Excellence Grand Gold award for “The Path to Graduation” (2024), in Video: Student Audience (Long). (Out of 4,223 global entries, Fresno State stood out in a field of 486 winners.)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Mapped out the end-to-end student experience from first contact through to enrollment, academic and co-curricular programming, and graduation to identify gaps, interventions, resourcing and support needs that have contributed to 12% enrollment growth and a 23% increase in student satisfaction scores within 7 months.
- Developed student success centers and programs supporting first-generation and military-connected students.
- Attained a \$100,000 Chevron grant to expand tutoring and supplemental instruction areas by an additional 1,500 sq. ft. of space that accommodates support for 15 new courses per semester.

Assistant Vice President – Research & Associate Dean of the Graduate School – Student Affairs and Enrollment

2021–2022

The University of Texas at Tyler

- **Strategic Planning:** Spearheaded a strategy to expand graduate and professional education programs as part of a broader University of Texas System initiative to consolidate research credentials, economic impact, and access to health services, aligning outreach with the anticipated launch of the UT at Tyler School of Medicine.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Developed business cases, operating plans and proposals for new academic and research facilities including a Biomedical Research Center (129,000 sq. ft.), Academic Resource Center (25,000 sq. ft.), and School of Rural & Community Health building (86,000 sq. ft.)
- **Student Success:** Led the planning and implementation of campus engagement, academic performance improvement, and student life initiatives to promote student well-being, professional development, and graduation prospects that yielded an 85% graduation rate (2% increase year over year) and 90% career placement rate.
- **Financial Management:** Advised the Senior Vice President of Research on the allocation of a \$7.5 million budget to prioritize research programs, and served as a Presidential appointee on the Endowment Audit Committee to advocate for transparency and efficiency.
- **Rural and Low-SES Student Support:** Developed a plan to realign student services and enrollment management conducive to Carnegie R2 status to increase recruitment and retention by 11%. Drove improvements in applications/enrollments from rural and low-SES populations.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported establishment of the first medical school in East Texas by stewarding the merger of University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler under the UT at Tyler to create a single unified institution, and leading successful accreditation efforts with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- Developed the Public Health graduate certificate program to drive a 15% increase in credit hours per semester.
- Restructured student and academic services in line with the integrated model to save more than \$375,000 over 3 years, and saved \$2 million during the COVID-19 pandemic by negotiating contract extensions for disrupted services.

Associate Provost and Associate Dean (Interim) of Student Affairs at the School of Medicine

2016–2021

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler

- **Strategic Planning:** Directed annual and multi-year strategic planning alongside the Provost to define and prioritize academic programs, student-facing initiatives, and partnerships with external bodies for the single teaching hospital and academic medical center in East Texas.

- **Academic Program Development:** Designated as Director of Institutional Research with overarching responsibility for curriculum design, instructional delivery and performance assessment to maximize student learning outcomes and engagement while adhering to regulatory requirements.
- **New Medical School:** Played a key supporting role in developing the operating model for the new School of Medicine, reporting to the Dean of the School of Medicine. Contributed to development of the admissions process, academic planning, student support, and student affairs and enrollment policy. Chaired the UT Tyler School of Medicine Self-Study Committee and supported institutional preparation for Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation.
- **Performance Management:** Prepared the SACSCOC reaffirmation report including the development of a data repository to facilitate the gathering, analysis and synthesis of key metrics. Captured data-driven insights from student feedback and assessment scores to deploy interventions as required.
- **Financial Management:** Managed a \$3 million annual budget with direct supervision of 12 personnel to allocate capital across academic and student affairs programs. Advised the Provost on the development of updated policies governing the scholarship award process to improve transparency and equity.
- **Partnerships:** Piloted an award-winning pipeline and pathways programs with Historically Black Colleges and Universities via Pre-Health Academies and Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Enrichment Programs.
- **Enrollment Management:** Developed a unified enrollment management and student support office in alignment with a 50% growth of academic program offerings.
- **Enrollment Management:** Designed and activated enrollment marketing initiatives targeted at improving diversity, spurring application volumes, and increasing prospective student interest to ultimately propel enrollment growth of 12% for Fall 2019 over the previous year.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Pivoted the operating model to digital modalities that supported the transition of two academic programs to 100% distance learning while upholding 92% satisfaction scores for online courses.
- Emphasized a strong focus on professional development and career opportunities that resulted in the retention of 40% of medical trainees and residents to practice in the region and 50% of public health graduates entering the local workforce for health interventions across a 45-county catchment.
- Chaired the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), contributing to a 15% reduction in threat-assessment cases during Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. Grant awards totaled a cumulative \$210,000.

Teacher and College & Career Counselor

2012–2016

New Summerfield High School

- **Student Success:** Counseled students in matters of higher education, career planning, and course selection to empower them to discover their purpose and strengths and align with career aspirations. Completed 1:1 sessions with 95% of seniors to catalyze a 30% improvement in students attending first-choice colleges.
- **Program Development:** Established a career exploratory curriculum to provide students with immersive exposure to 20 career fields. Created a mentorship program that provided 75% of students with career mentors and increased internship participation by 50%.
- **Community Service:** Partnered with local organizations to shape new service-learning projects that engaged 90% of students in community service. Introduced a service scholarship program to facilitate student service.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Implemented a college preparatory program that boosted college applications by 40% year over year while driving a 25% increase in matriculation rates.
- Initiated a financial aid workshop that promoted greater awareness and knowledge of financial assistance options to grow FAFSA completion rates by 20% and increase scholarship awards by 20%.

Dean of Student Affairs

2009–2012

Lon Morris College

- **Strategic Recruitment:** Devised a recruitment strategy and planned community initiatives and partnerships that increased first-year student applications by 25% over 3 years. Emphasized a focus on education access for underserved populations to increase applications from minorities by 30% in the same period.
- **Student Engagement:** Improved student participation in campus programs and initiatives by 40% through student programs focused on academic success, leadership development and community engagement to foster a deeper sense of community and promote career prospects.
- **Crisis Management:** Instituted and enforced training, response plans and protocols for student crisis management to educate staff and faculty on recognizing signs of student distress, refer students to appropriate resources, and place a paramount focus on student safety and well-being.
- **Fundraising:** Sourced, negotiated and closed partnerships with local businesses, schools, and community organizations to drive a 50% increase in donations and sponsorships for new student program development and scholarships.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Conceptualized, developed and implemented a learning community model linking academic programs with student life initiatives to uplift first-to-second-year retention by 20%.
- Managed and mentored a team of 23 student life professionals to provide regular coaching, feedback and professional development opportunities that reduced staff turnover by 25%.

Committee Clerk

2008–2009

Texas House of Representatives – Committee on Urban Affairs

- **Policy Development:** Analyzed and developed policy recommendations on 20 urban affairs bills per legislative session, conducting research, drafting policy briefs, and presenting findings to the committee chair and members; 80% of recommendations were incorporated into final committee reports.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Built and maintained relationships with over 50 urban affairs stakeholders, including city officials, nonprofits, and advocacy groups, facilitating communication and collaboration between these groups and the committee; organized 10 stakeholder roundtables per year, resulting in the identification of key urban issues and the development of bipartisan legislative solutions.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapters

Willis, K. L., & Holmes, B. D. (2026). Student affairs and reimagining the university student experience (Chapter 9, beginning p. 104). In *Success as Destiny: Higher Education Leadership for Institutional and Student Success Amid Challenge and Opportunity*. STAR SCHOLARS PRESS. Published May 24, 2026.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/rqhsn209>

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Willis, K. L. (2025). *Direct Admission at the CSU: Early Outcomes and Statewide Expansion Under SB 640*. Higher Education Policy Brief Series, 25(12). <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8467175g>

Fillman, S. A., Holmes, B. D., Parker, D. M., & **Willis, K. L.** (2022). *Building community for completion: Doctoral students' perceptions of technology integration within dissertation committee collaboration*. Journal of Advancing Education Practice, 3(1), Article 3. <https://openriver.winona.edu/jaep/vol3/iss1/3>

Willis, K. L., & Marzilli, C. (2021). *Social determinants or non-medical factors affecting health*. IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences, 20(1), 45–49.

Willis, K. L., & Marzilli, C. (2021). *Conceptualizing narrative health and medicine to develop cultural competence to improve communication during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Advances in Social Science Research Journal, 8(1), 32–36. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.81.2021>

Willis, K. L. (2021). *Adult learning theory: Reflections on the role of mentoring as a key to success in advanced degree programs*. American Journal of Educational Research and Reviews, 6, Article 80.
<https://doi.org/10.28933/ajerr-2020-11-2505>

Parker, D. M., **Willis, K. L.**, & Holmes, B. D. (2020). *Doctoral student online learning: Addressing challenges of the virtual experience*. Journal of Research Initiatives, 5(2), Article 1.
<https://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol5/iss2/1>

Willis, K. L., & Tuell, C. (2020). *Theoretical constructs of dissent leadership: Moving from theory to practice*. Open Journal of Leadership, 9(4), 214–222. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2020.94013>

Willis, K. L., & Perry, C. (2019). *Advancing scholarly collaboration through interprofessional teaching and learning*. Journal of College Teaching & Learning.

Templeton, N. R., Hammett, R., Low, G., Arrambide, M., & **Willis, K. L.** (2016). *A principal leadership framework for enhancing teacher practice through coaching with emotional intelligence*. International Journal of Transformative Emotional Intelligence, 4, 93–103.

Templeton, N. R., **Willis, K. L.**, & Hendricks, L. (2016). *The coaching principal: Building teacher capacity through the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)*. International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 8(4), 140–145.

Holmes, B. D., **Willis, K. L.**, & Woods, E. (2016). *Strategic onboarding of online doctoral students: Creating a pathway to academic persistence*. Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies, 3(2), 136–139.

Scholarly Monographs

Willis, K. L. (2015). *Advancement of college readiness in South Texas: Perspectives on improved outcomes for at-risk students*. Doctoral dissertation, Hampton University.

Invited & Professional Publications (Non-Peer-Reviewed)

Willis, K. L., & Ratcliff, A. (2020). *Promoting student success in uncertain times: Five practical strategies for academic leaders during the pandemic*. Academic Leader. <https://www.academicleader.com>

DOCTORAL COMMITTEE & DISSERTATION MENTORSHIP

Burwell, N. T. (2025). *Bridging Community Needs and Accreditation: Enhancing Continuing Education Program Design in Rural Southeastern U.S. Community Colleges (Ph.D.).* Prescott College

Parker, L. C. (2024). *Exploring the Perceptions and Perspectives of Frontline Healthcare Professionals During COVID-19: Organizational Effectiveness (Ed.D.).* Grand Canyon University

Mursal, A. S. (2021). *Immigrant Learning in Community Colleges: Unpacking Student Experiences in Minnesota (Ed.D.).* Winona State University

Fillman, S. A. (2021). *Educating 21st Century Technology Career Professionals: Perspectives on Soft Skills (Ed.D.).*

Guillaume, N. M. (2021). *Instructional Strategies and Rigor: Private School Administrator and Teacher Perspectives on Improving Minnesota's College Mathematic Readiness (Ed.D.).*

De La Fosse, K. R. (2021). *Pedagogic Recontextualization in Health Science Education During a Global Pandemic: Faculty Perspectives on Instructional Adaptations (Ed.D.).*

Bradley-Gray, A. (2020). *School Climate: Exploring Stakeholders' Perspective in One Urban Virginia Elementary School (Ph.D.).* Hampton University

Tuell, C. (2020). *Health Literacy in Vulnerable Populations Within East Texas: Addressing Needs and Improving Outcomes (Ed.D.).* University of Houston

Hamilton, J. E. (2019). *The Changing Face of Education: Perspectives on Demographic Change and Student Achievement in Texas Public Schools (Ed.D.).* University of Houston

Roberts, M. R. (2019). *African American Cultural Identity Salience through the Communication Practices of Members of All-Black Towns in Oklahoma (Ph.D.).* Regent University

INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE

SAHE 5346: Ethical and Legal Issues in Student Affairs — Graduate Level
Stephen F. Austin State University, Fall 2025

Graduate-level course examining ethical frameworks and legal foundations guiding decision-making in student affairs and higher education administration. Instruction emphasizes applied ethical reasoning, professional responsibility, and compliance with legal standards affecting student support and institutional operations.

HIED 5305: Fundamentals of Educational Research and Institutional Assessment — Graduate Level
East Texas Baptist University, Spring 2020; Spring 2021; Fall 2022

Graduate-level course introducing foundational research methods and institutional assessment practices in higher education. Instruction emphasized research design, data-informed decision-making, assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness, and application of evidence to improve programs, policies, and learner outcomes.

PBHL 5350: Internship/Practicum (APE) I — Graduate Level (3 credits)
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Fall 2016–Fall 2021

Supervised practicum experience supporting applied professional engagement in public health and allied practice environments. Instruction emphasized experiential learning, workforce preparation, applied research, community engagement, and reflective practice aligned with organizational effectiveness and professional competency development.

COMH 5320: Public Health Education & Communication — Graduate Level (3 credits)

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Spring 2018; Spring 2019

Graduate-level course examining theory and practice in health communication and public health education. Instruction focused on the design, implementation, and evaluation of communication strategies for public health practice, including social marketing, media advocacy, risk communication, and behavior change initiatives.

EDUO 800: Academic Residency — Doctoral Level (1–6 credits)

Winona State University, Summers 2016–2019

Doctoral-level residency experience designed to support sustained scholarly engagement, cohort-based learning, and academic socialization into professional and research communities. Instruction emphasized inquiry skills, research design and methodology, scholarly writing, and the development of professional dispositions, values, and norms associated with doctoral study and scholarly leadership.

EDUO 801: Current Trends and Issues in Education — Doctoral Level (3 credits)

Winona State University, Fall 2016–2019

Doctoral seminar examining current and emerging issues shaping education systems and policy. Instruction focused on research-informed analysis of organizational practices affecting learner outcomes, including national standards, policy reform, organizational culture, diversity, instructional technology, school choice, compensation models, and systemic reform efforts.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- **UC Berkeley**, *Executive Leadership Academy Fellow – Center for Studies in Higher Education*
- **Rutgers University**, *Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Aspiring Leaders Program*
- **Harvard Bok Center**, *Higher Education Teaching Certificate*
- **Texas Council of Chief Academic Officers**, *Leadership Academy Fellow*
- **Gallup**, *Certified Strengths Coaching Certification*

GRANT AWARDS & CONTRACTS

- **CSU Chancellor’s Office, (2024) \$500,000** Rapid Rehousing and Housing Security Program Grant; Center for Essential Needs, California State University, Fresno (funded through June 2028)
- **UT Tyler, (2022) \$145,000** Internal Grant Unified Medical Experience Talent Tracking and Support (UMETTS) (Office of Sponsored Research)
- **National Library of Medicine, (2021) \$125,000** Digital Health Promotion Grant, Health Education and Literacy (HEAL) project
- **Texas Workforce Commission, (2019) \$100,000** Wagner-Peyser 7 (b) Office of the Governor; Texas Talent Connection Program; (In partnership with Jacksonville Independent School District)
- **Texas Workforce Commission, (2018) \$100,000** Wagner-Peyser 7 (b) Office of the Governor; Texas Talent Connection Program; (in partnership with Tyler Independent School District)
- **The University of Texas System Population Health Grant (2017), \$10,000.** Public Health Student Projects for Health Communication and Outreach

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- **George Blumenthal Scholar**, University of California, Berkeley, *Mentorship Program, 2021*
- **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**, Smith County Chapter, *Outstanding Community Engagement Award, 2019*
- **Career and Technical Education Association of Texas**, *Champion Award, 2018*

- **U.S. Congressional Award (Public Law 96-114), Gold Medal, 2016**
- **UT Tyler Health, Outstanding Student Support Award, Master of Public Health Program, 2018**

BOARD & COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Coalition for Student Wellbeing, *Advisory Board Member*
- Journal of Advanced Education Practice (JAEP), Winona State University, *Editorial Board Member*, 2019–present
- Stephen F. Austin State University, *President's Enrollment Advisory Board*, Current
- Stephen F. Austin State University, *Strategic Planning Committee*, Current
- The University of Texas System, *Enrollment Management Committee*
- The University of Texas System, *Student Affairs Committee*
- Association for Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), *Council on Student Affairs*, 2023–2024
- Bridge to College, Central California College Readiness Program, *Board Member*, 2023–present
- East Texas Baptist University, *Board of Trustees, Member*, 2021–present
- People Attempting to Help (PATH), Tyler, TX, *Board Member*, 2020–2022
- Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children – East Texas (CASA), *Board Member*, 2019–2022
- Leadership Tyler, *Board Member*, 2018–2022
- U.S. Public Service Academy, *Youth Advisory Council*, 2007–2011
- Samaritan Counseling Center of East Texas, *Board Member*, 2021–2022

RECENT MEDIA & PUBLIC COMMENTARY

- **"Colleges Boast Record Enrollment and Fall Classes"** — *Inside Higher Ed*. This national higher-education news article highlights SFA's strong fall 2025 enrollment outcomes — including a more than 31% increase in first-year students and overall enrollment growth — citing Willis's leadership on Promise Plus, transfer partnerships, and community engagement strategies as drivers of momentum.
- **"Student Mental Health Advocates Want 988 Lifeline on All College IDs"** — *LearningWell Magazine*. Coverage on mental-health advocacy including Willis's perspective on student well-being initiatives and policy priorities.
- **"The Enrollment Cliff"** — *AGB Magazine / Trusteeship*. Features institutional success stories and includes Willis's insights on how SFA's strategic enrollment management approach generated growth against national demographic challenges.
- **"SFA Sets New Fall Enrollment Record"** — *Stephen F. Austin State University News*. University press release on record undergraduate growth — the largest incoming class and first overall enrollment increase since 2018 — quoting Willis on strategic leadership.
- **"SFA Sets New Fall Semester Record for Undergraduate Applications"** — *Stephen F. Austin State University News*. Coverage of SFA receiving over 20,000 undergraduate applications with remarks by Willis on expanded outreach and access strategies.
- **Local News Coverage** — **CBS19 / KTRE**. Television and online news reports on SFA's record-breaking application and enrollment figures highlight Willis's work to a broader regional audience.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Willis, K. L. (2026, October 29). *Current Issues in Enrollment Management*. Executive Leadership Academy, University of California, Berkeley.